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Favored photog

Mario Testino, one of the world's most sought after photographers, is holding his first Beijing exhibition.



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Shattered dreams

Wang Ying's latest documentary shows the disappointment that often follows higher education.

Great gifts for Dad

Father's Day is this weekend! If you're still searching for that perfect gift, it might be time to consider something vintage.

Beijing Today has a round up on great gifts like classic time pieces, bicycles and musical instruments. Check inside before you shop to make sure Dad doesn't end up disappointed.

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Solution for poor education system may be in the home

By Bao Chengrong

Last Wednesday, seven-year-old Zhang Hongping was watching cartoons and eating chips at home.

His classmates, however, had to go to class.

Zhang owes his special schedule to his father Zhang Qiaofeng, a Peking University graduate, who has been homeschooling the boy since last year.

Their parlor has stacks of books on mathematics, literature and English. All the books were chosen by Zhang except for the mathematics books, which were recommended by schools in the US.

Zhang Qiaofeng, who is in his late 40s, said the US has a superior environment for early education, and hopes his son can experience its strong points.

"The most important difference is that every individual learns at his own pace. Education is about developing one's skill in discovery and analysis, and in using creative approaches to problem-solving," Zhang said. "Chinese education focuses too much on rote memorization."

His son's courses include mathematics, literature and English, as well as extra-curricular activities such as swimming, football and drawing. Zhang said all classes are his son's favorites.

He takes his son out to play every Sunday. Sometimes, they skip classes to participate in activities during the week.

Zhang only recently came upon the idea of homeschooling. Like many parents, he wanted to send his son to the best junior high in Beijing, and finally chose a school known for its English classes.

He was surprised when his son became unhappy and stopped speaking to anyone three weeks into the semester. He said his son often went hungry at school, and was unhappy that one student was

always chosen to be the class representative.

At home, Zhang Hongping learned quickly. His dad often acquired new material, such as episodes of English-language television shows, so no lesson was repeated more than four times.

Recalling his own education, Zhang said primary school was his ticket out of the village. His high scores on the junior high entrance exam enabled him to study at one of the best schools in Fujian Province: Putian school. There, he was recognized for his talent in mathematics and won a prize in a national contest, which helped him to continue his studies at Peking University.

After studying physics for two years, he took a year off to study history and literature on his own.

"I made amazing progress that year, and it helped me a lot," he said.

Zhang compared China's compulsory primary education with national medical insurance: "It provides all children the same lowest level of education."

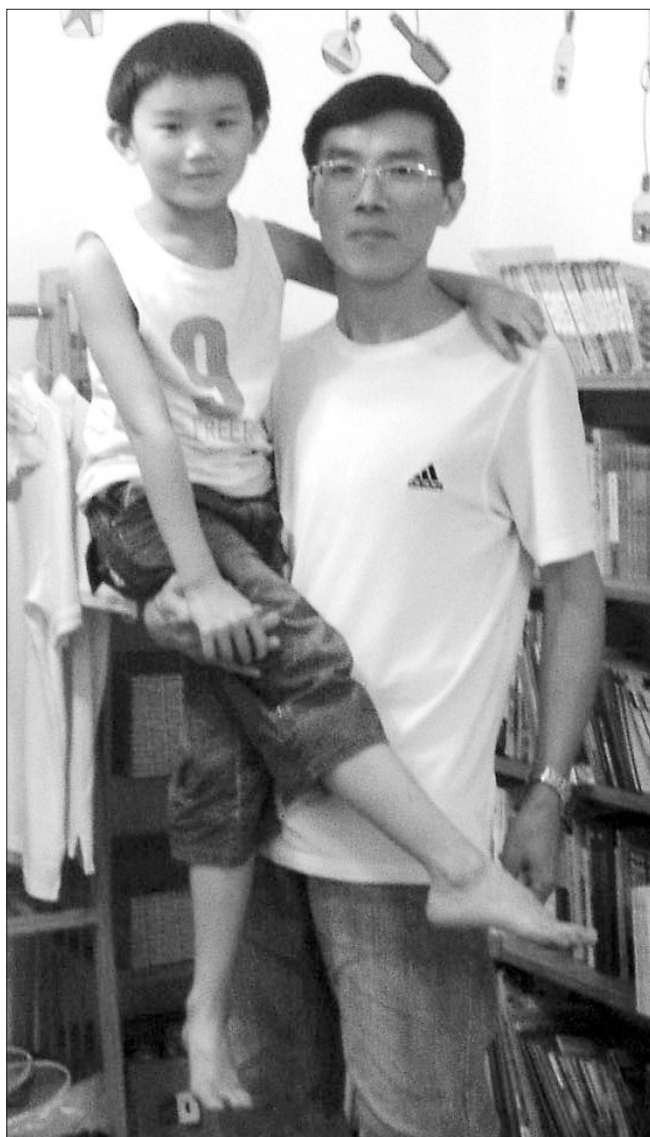
To give his son the intimate learning experience he never had, Zhang decided to invite three to four children to study together with his son. His short-term goal was to help those children be accepted by the world's top colleges – his long-term goal was to train them to be giants.

The other students pay 60,000 yuan per year for their lessons.

Zhang is not the first to flirt with homeschooling.

In the US, where the right to homeschool a child is protected, the practice is quite common. Many families choose to homeschool for religious reasons or because the public schools are too far away or too poorly equipped.

But Chinese parents who homeschool face



Zhang Qiaofeng and his son Zhang Hongping

Photo by Bao Chengrong

unusual challenges.

"In China, the national education system establishes universal standards. If you homeschool, you do not fit into the educational system," said Peter Herford, a professor at Shantou University and a visiting professor at Hong Kong University. "Degrees and formal education are important in China for employment, advancement and citizenship."

Zhang said parents who do not plan to send their children abroad might not be suitable for homeschooling. In addition,

those who are not able to bear the cost or who are unqualified to teach their children are better off enrolling in public school.

China has a long history of being exam-orientated. But history has made no guarantee of fairness.

The problems with the National College Entrance Exam are well known, and the practice of rote memorization favors girls and strangles students' social lives and physical development.

The first attempt to reform Chinese education came in 1982, when the government added

classes in the arts, music and sports to its syllabus.

But most schools cancel these classes and use their time to teach material more likely to appear on an entrance exam.

Eighty universities, including Peking, Tsinghua and Fudan, have already started their own enrollment system that goes around the entrance exam.

"The reality is that Chinese universities have not cultivated excellent talents in the past 30 years," said Zhu Qingshi, headmaster of South University of Science and Technology of China.

Zhu said real talents have to be imaginative, as that is the most basic quality required for innovation. It is also important to have perceptive insights to discover the common rules beyond a phenomenon.

To cultivate such kind of talents, the South University of Science and Technology of China recruited 50 students outside the exam system last year: 45 were 18 years old, and the youngest was only 10.

Since being recognized by the Education Ministry in April, the school has expanded its enrollment to 180. Newly admitted students will still have to take the National College Entrance Exam, but its score can account for no more than 60 percent of the admission process. The school will also look at daily performance and ability in its admissions.

With 65 teachers, each instructs no more than three students.

Reform is equally important in the middle and high school system.

At the forefront is The Affiliated High School of Renmin University, which offers more than 150 electives for students and encourages them to pursue their own interests. Several exchange students from schools in less developed areas are also allowed to share its resources.

Coffee shop attracts cat lovers

By Zhong Jidong

It is a cafe unlike any other: not only do its cats stroll around the guests as they sip coffee – stray hairs in the cup is the norm rather than the exception.

The cafe is managed by 29-year-old cat lover Ke Yunfang. Located in a hutong off Beiluogu Xiang, it has no eye-catching signs.

But that hasn't stopped it from becoming a favorite haunt of the capital's cat lovers.

"People, young and old, come here because of these cats," Ke said. Most of his animals are rescued strays.

Ke said the purpose is to give the cats a happy life. Working with other animal care organizations, Ke is able to provide

them with food and shelter.

Before coming to Beijing, Ke ran a similar establishment in Shanghai. He said he hopes to open a chain of similar cat cafes in cities such as Guangzhou and Shenzhen.

The cafe was originally designed for 10 feline guests, but the cat population has grown to more than 20.

Ke said cat lovers are allowed to adopt animals from the cafe. The only requirements are a stable income, a clean home and an affectionate character.

So far, more than 10 cats have been adopted by the cafe's patrons.

The cat cafe concept was popularized in Japan in 2004. It attracts customers by pro-

viding a chance to interact with animals. Animals such as cats are believed to provide humans with certain psychological benefits: they can relieve stress and act as a type of "spiritual medium" to help humans come closer to nature.

Ke said he thinks these properties make cats ideal companions in modern society.

Smartphone dilemma

Cell makers court death in union with Web portals

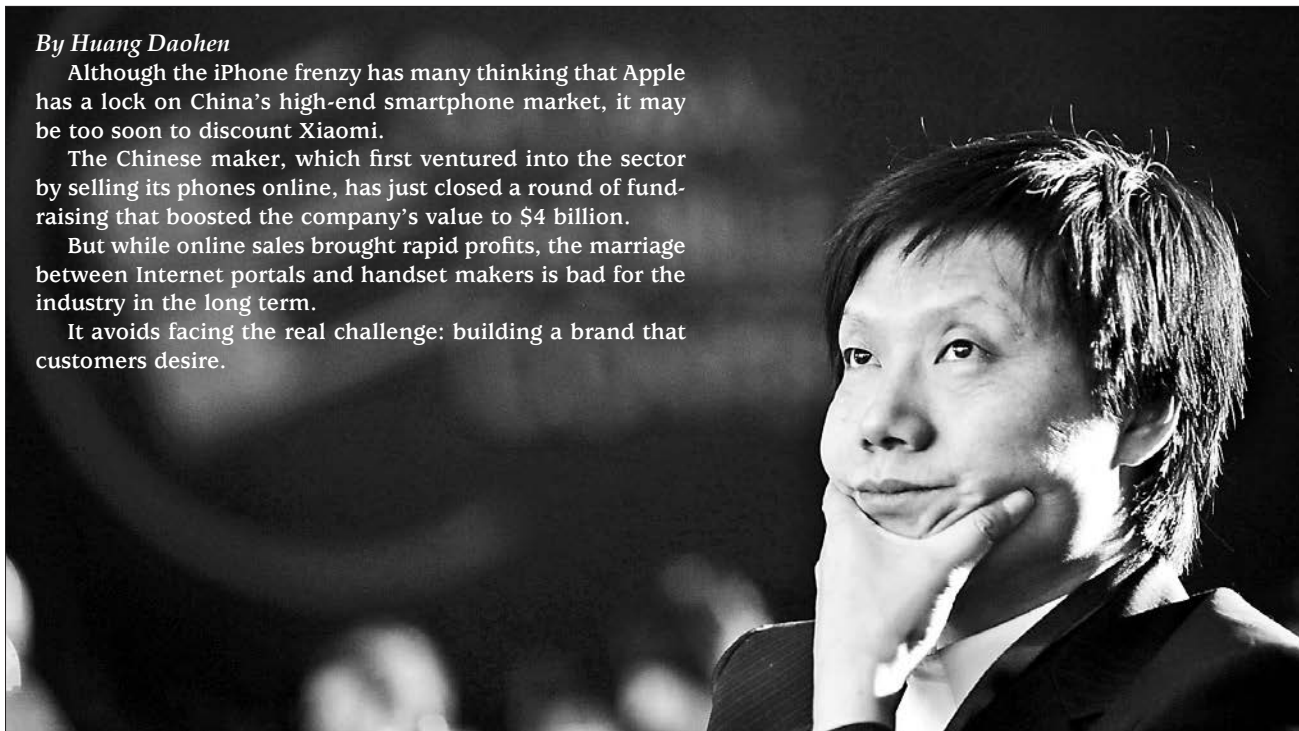
By Huang Daohen

Although the iPhone frenzy has many thinking that Apple has a lock on China's high-end smartphone market, it may be too soon to discount Xiaomi.

The Chinese maker, which first ventured into the sector by selling its phones online, has just closed a round of fundraising that boosted the company's value to \$4 billion.

But while online sales brought rapid profits, the marriage between Internet portals and handset makers is bad for the industry in the long term.

It avoids facing the real challenge: building a brand that customers desire.



Lei Jun, founder and CEO of Xiaomi. The company was the first to enter the budget smartphone market.

IC Photo

Smartphone battlefield

Yang Ping was glad when his parents told him he could buy a smartphone to celebrate the end of his college entrance exam. However, he was quickly overwhelmed by the number of brands and options.

Working with a budget of 2,000 yuan, Yang hoped to buy a phone using the Android 4.0 operating system that supported as many functions as possible.

"When I went to the Zhongguancun market, it made me dizzy," Yang said. "There were so many options, and I hardly knew which to choose."

To Yang, the booming business in Zhongguancun seemed to indicate the industry's prosperity – but for phone makers, the battlefield is brutal.

In a recent rare spat, Lei Jun, the founder of Xiaomi, and Zhou Hongyi, president of the security software provider Qihoo 360, tore into each other online.

The reason is simple: they are competitors.

In mid-May, when Xiaomi announced a cheaper version of its MiOne phone Youth Edition priced at 1,499 yuan (\$235), Qihoo 360 unveiled its first branded phone made by Huawei Technologies for the same price.

In his Sina Weibo, Zhou called Lei the bully of the market and criticized Xiaomi for its hardware problems, marketing approach and inadequate

customer service. Lei denied the charges, and said Zhou was manipulating netizens to disgrace Xiaomi's products.

"Someone wanting to enter the smartphone market should focus on developing smartphones – not copying other models and promoting his product by picking a fight," Lei said.

In a statement, Xiaomi said it is not afraid of a battle of words, but does not intend to become embroiled in one.

To industry analysts, the online spat showed the intense competition in the country's smartphone sector.

"More outsiders, especially Internet firms, have shown a growing interest to tap the smartphone market," said Wen Yijun, analyst with Oriental Securities in Beijing.

"Through the spat, Zhou got what he wanted – to bring his phone to the same level of attention as the Xiaomi before it even entered the market," Wen said.

Qihoo 360 isn't alone. E-commerce giant Alibaba and leading search portal Baidu recently unveiled their new branded smartphones: the 699-yuan W619 by Tianyu, and the H5018 by Changhong, which is said to be priced below 1,000 yuan.

Baidu said W619 would run its own mobile operating system that integrates with the company's cloud computing resources.

The search engine giant launched its first branded smartphone with Dell last year, but the high price and

limited sales channels made it go unnoticed.

Baidu's new move is seen by many as a strategy to command the mobile Internet.

The biggest Internet firm Tencent has launched six smartphone models intended for students.

Rumors also had it that online game company Shengda is likely to launch its Bambook phone in the coming months. Another news portal, NetEase, is reportedly considering a mobile terminal.

"The huge volume of the country's smartphone market has attracted various players," Wen said.

Figures from Oriental Securities show that smartphone shipments are expected to outpace those of ordinary phones next year.

Although companies are all trying to enter the smartphone market, Wen said there are questions of product quality and after-sale services.

"They should not expect to profit by selling hardware," Wen said, noting that they may attempt to profit on the App store model.

"But I don't think there is a firm in China that can achieve similar success," Wen said. "Apple's iOS and ecosystem is hard to replicate."

Marriage hurts

Following the success of Xiaomi, which used the e-commerce model to bring in more than 1 billion yuan by selling 500,000 units per month, more mobile phone makers are trying to cooperate with Internet portals.

Yet the marriage may harm them in the long term, Wen said.

"It is a perfect idea in theory, but would work otherwise in reality," Wen said. Previously, cell phone manufacturers sold their products through authorized dealers and promotional campaigns that ate into their profits.

"By working with Internet portals and e-commerce sites, these manufacturers can sell devices over the web, which will help slash advertising costs," Wen said.

But the two sides have different long-term goals. For phone makers who are eager to sell their inventory, they are concerned more with sales revenue.

Internet portals focus more on their long-term influence over the growing mobile Web.

"The Internet market is always about price," Wen said. They push mobile device makers to slash prices as much as possible.

To phone makers, the price strategy can be fatal, as prices can rarely ever be increased in the future.

The cooperation between phone maker Huawei and e-commerce site 360buy is another example.

A high-end Huawei smartphone, manufactured exclusively for 360buy, was priced by the site at just 1,499 yuan – its goal was to attract users with the low price.

"But at that price, Huawei earns no more than 10 yuan on each sale," Wen said.

Bogus banker arrested for tax fraud

By Huang Daohen

Wenzhou entrepreneur Lin Chunping, who faked a story about buying a US bank, has been detained on suspicion of using illegal value-added tax (VAT) invoices, local police said last weekend.

Lin, 42, together with six other businessmen, was accused of creating fake VAT invoices and selling them to obtain export tariff rebates. Several companies under Lin's control also have illegally used the invoices.

In a statement, local police said the invoices were made in more than 20 provinces across the country. More than 100 million yuan in fake invoices were made during the last year.

Lin disappeared in late May. He was captured in Guangdong Province after a nationwide manhunt.

"There were rumors that Lin fled the city in March," a businessman surnamed Ma told the *Wenzhou Evening News*.

Ma once cooperated with Lin to invest in mining, the report said.

Lin could face up to 10 years in prison, it said.

Lin became an overnight sensation earlier this year when he said he bought the Atlantic Bank of America for \$60 million (382 million yuan).

In a time when Wenzhou, a private business powerhouse, was rocked by financial crisis and many bosses fled, Lin's announcement was hailed by the local government and praised as innovative.

Lin was later was appointed a member of the municipal Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). The financial hero left his CPPCC post 70 days after the appointment when it was discovered he had lied.

"I did a quick search on the official website of the Office of the State Bank Commissioner in Delaware, where Lin claimed his bank was located, but failed to find Lin's bank on the list of updated banking facilities," said a netizen named "Suanle," who was believed to be the first to publicly accuse Lin of faking his acquisition.

Industrial experts soon followed, and an investigation by Xinhua News Agency revealed his claims to be completely fabricated.

In March, Lin admitted he lied and apologized.

Lin's case may cast a shadow to Wenzhou's small businesses, which have long been known for their good faith.

Now and then

Philadelphia musician renews its affinity with China

By Bao Chengrong

Climbing the Great Wall again after 39 years, 75-year-old Herbert Light, one of the oldest violinists of the Philadelphia Orchestra, thought about his first visit to China.

Light arrived again in Beijing earlier this month for a 10-day stay, during which Philadelphia Orchestra performed in Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

The Philadelphia Orchestra's initial visit in 1973 caused a stir because it was the first group of American musicians to perform in China. It was regarded as an ambassador that paved the way for President Richard Nixon's eventual visit.

Light was busy last Sunday taking pictures and reminiscing about his first visit. Another person in the group, 76-year-old Nicholas Platt, was a member of the US Liaison Office when he accompanied the orchestra in 1973.

"The differences are interesting, because (back then) there were no buildings and we were the only tourists," Light said. "And it had a different feel. Here, everyone is so friendly. We feel like we're back home."

After the original tour, the orchestra returned to China to perform five more times. The last concert was held two years ago.

Two weeks ago, as part of Residency Week, the orchestra performed in communi-



Old musicians Herbert Light (left) and Booker Rowe (right) assist Nicholas Platt (middle) up the Great Wall.

Photo provided by organizer

ties, giving the public a chance to experience the world's most famous classical pieces.

The orchestra played in the Temple of Heaven, the Summer Palace and Beihai Park on May 30.

Thanks in part to perfect weather, the shows drew huge crowds, both young and old.

The orchestra also played at schools, including special education schools.

The show on June 1 included Beethoven's Symphony No. 7, Don Juan, and Interruption of Dream, a composition by Chinese musician Du Wei.

Charles Dutoit, the chief

director of the orchestra, said he appreciated Du's work, saying Interruption of Dream perfectly combined Chinese traditional music with Western music, and was very modern. Dutoit also said he and his companions were always seeking new elements to blend into the Philadelphia Orchestra.

The trip marked Dutoit's last international concert with the orchestra, as he is set to leave soon. Light said Dutoit brought new perspectives to each performance and was flexible enough to allow members to make changes.

Change is something

Light is more than familiar with. As it relates to China, he said audiences in the '70s were more predictable in their applause — it would always be the same no matter whether they enjoyed a performance or not. The reaction made Eugene Ormandy, the former conductor, disappointed because he thought the audience didn't love the performance.

These days, Chinese audiences often give standing ovations and ask for encores.

Light also remembered Jiang Qing, Mao Zedong's wife, being in the audience for one of his performances.

Ormandy had planned to play Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, but was ordered by Jiang to play No. 6 just a few hours before they took the stage. It took Platt, the former diplomat, lots of effort to persuade Ormandy to compromise.

Jiang got to hear Symphony No. 6 in the end.

In September 2011, the Philadelphia Orchestra signed an agreement with the National Center for the Performing Arts, supported by both China and the US State Council. Residency Week was only the beginning of a five-year plan.

British scholar talks about new research on Dickens

By Liu Xiaochen

Activities related to Charles Dickens — in commemoration of 200 years since his birth — continue to be organized in Beijing. On June 9, Malcom Andrews spoke about Dickens in a lecture sponsored by the British Council.

Andrews, 70, is a professor at the University of Kent in the UK, and has researched Dickens for 50 years. He is editor of the journal *Dickensian*.

His most recent lecture, however, was not about Dickens' life or his works. It was about his public readings. "I thought for a long time: how strange it is that nobody else has written a book about this aspect of Dickens," Andrews said. "There are

some essays and articles, but not a full book."

Andrews' most recent book, published by Oxford Press, is *Charles Dickens and His Performing Selves*.

Andrews said that performers have the ability to make audiences laugh and cry in public, which is very different from a novelist who works alone.

"He really feels a huge amount of energy when he gets up in front of the audiences," Andrews said. "And he feels the affection coming back from the audience. He reads them, they laugh and cry, and he feels that energy coming back to him."

Dickens learned to do that.

"When he was in a good mood, he was great fun," Andrews said. "He had a great sense of humor, told jokes very well."

"When he was a bit moody, then he could become difficult. He had a complicated personality, with many different moods."

Andrews said there were several reasons he enjoys researching Dickens more than other writers. He said Dickens' worlds are vivid and outstanding. Also, Andrews' grandfather also liked Dickens, so the scholar believes perhaps his interest in the great author was in his blood all along.

Andrews became inter-

ested in Dickens' readings because Andrews enjoys public readings himself. He was interested in the technique, including voice and gestures.

The research on such an obscure topic was, understandably, difficult.

"He is a puzzle. For example, you know he wrote a letter, but you cannot find it," Andrews said. "I keep in touch with most of the major Dickens scholars in the world. When I get stuck on something, I just email experts in America or Australia and we talk about the problems."

Andrews took the opportunity to compare 19th-century UK, the time Dickens



Malcom Andrews

Photo by Liu Xiaochen

was writing, with modern-day China.

"I think China is also undergoing such a process" of large-scale industrialization and urbanization, Andrews said.

He said he hopes more Chinese readers will seek out Dickens' works. He said he'd like to see a Dickens reading group form here, where fans can come together and discuss the author's works.

China and Maldives to strengthen relationship

By Liu Xiaochen

In response to growing tourism demand, the Maldives set up Tourism Bureau offices in Beijing and Shanghai earlier this month.

China is also working with the island nation to develop trade and infrastructure. On June 11, Maldivian officials met with heads of the Chinese Machinery and Engineering Corporation (CMEC) to talk about ways to strengthen cooperation.

Mohamed Muizzu, the minister of housing and infrastructure spoke with *Beijing Today* on June 12 about the countries' relationship.

Beijing Today (BT): What is your purpose for coming to China this time?

Mohamed Muizzu: My visit to China was mainly to discuss the ongoing projects in Maldives in regards to housing and infrastructures. As you may know, there is a housing project that is ongoing in Maldives, by CMEC. The project should finish by the end of this year. However, there are some issues that need to be sorted out.

So far, I have met the heads of CMEC and other senior officials of the body as well. And the meeting was very successful. They are very positive in supporting and funding the housing projects, and other infrastructure projects in the future.

BT: Could you introduce some specific details about the projects in China?

Muizzu: The housing project in Maldives is in a city near



Mohamed Muizzu

Photo provided by Maldives Embassy

the capital, called Hulhumale. In that city we are building mainly three-bedroom housing units... of medium level. We have a process for allocating these units. Housing in Maldives is one of our main needs. That the Chinese can assist in this is really good for us.

Actually, the first housing project in Maldives was in the 1990s, funded by the Chinese government. This second phase of the housing project we hope to start this year will mark the 40th anniversary of the start of relations between China and

Maldives. We are very happy to know this.

BT: Have you run into any difficulty in this project?

Muizzu: As you know, in Maldives, we don't produce the materials that we need for any project, including housing. All materials have been imported from China. That is the main challenge, but the company doing the work has been very efficient. Their work is of very high quality, and the final product is good.

Actually, we are also look-

ing forward to building the first transoceanic bridge in Maldives. We hope we can get this sorted out.

BT: What new policies are in place, since your government recently changed?

Muizzu: In February of this year, there was a change of government. However, the country is back to normal now. The stability is there. The new policies of the government will mainly concern housing and infrastructure. Our main policy is around sustainable develop-

ment. As you may know, the Maldives has more than 200 inhabitable islands. Our aim is to have a policy for the rational development of urban centers around the country. We would [like to] consolidate the population and bring people from the small islands to large islands and give them a good education ... and opportunities.

However, in recent years, a lot of investment has been wasted, and projects haven't been sustained. So we'd like to turn back toward sustainable projects that are manageable and meaningful.

Housing, as I mentioned, is the main aspect. If we are going to move people to the big islands, we need good houses.

BT: What other relationships with the Chinese do you have?

Muizzu: There is one Chinese company who is actually showing interest in developing a major project in Maldives. I can't go into detail, but it is a very big, billion-dollar project, the sort of thing the Maldives needs to develop.

There's been an increase in Chinese tourists. We get about 1 million tourists every year, and most are Chinese. It contributes a lot to our economy. A lot of young Chinese people are choosing Maldives for honeymoons and holidays.

I think Maldives has a very close relationship with China. It should grow more and more. We feel the people of China are really close to us. I have no doubt about it.

France International School embraces new building

By Bao Chengrong

A signing ceremony for a new France International School was held on June 8. The new building, which was designed by Jacques Ferrier, who designed the French pavilion at the Shanghai World Expo, should be ready by 2014, said the French embassy.

The school will be moving from its current location in Sanlitun to an orchard adjoining Beijing Capital International Airport. It will have all the amenities expected of an international school and upscale development.

It aims to be an environmental friendly and energy-efficient school. Innovative technology allows its classrooms to absorb sunshine while insulating heat, creating a bright and comfortable environment for students.

All roofs will be covered with lawns so the building is able to recycle rainwater as well. The school's hot water will be powered by solar energy. All furniture will be made from recyclable materials.

The concept behind the school is "Emotional Life," which was also the theme of the France's Expo pavil-



The signing ceremony for a new France International School last Friday
Photo by Bao Chengrong

lion, according to France JFA Architects.

"It will be a pearl of French architectural culture in China," said Sylvie Bermann, the

French ambassador.

The new school is capable of holding about 1,700 students.

The school will cost somewhere between €21 and €23

million (168 to 183 million yuan), sponsored by a reserve fund, AEFÉ, a French national public agency.

Established in 1964, France International School was once a school attached to the French embassy. In 2007, the school expanded its recruitment range and accepted students who had no connection with the French embassy.

There are currently more than 1,000 students, 70 percent of whom are French. More than 95 percent of its students continue on to higher education.

Homebrewers in Beijing

By Annie Wei

Tuesday night, the craft beer shop El Nido at Fangjia Hutong was packed as usual, except this time, some people weren't just buying El Nido's beer – they were drinking their own.

They were part of the city's newest group, Beijing Homebrewing Society, and had gathered for their bi-monthly meeting.

Jacob Wickham, an American scientist working for the China Academy of Sciences, and Yin Hai, a local electric engineer, founded the society earlier this year.

Yin said he liked wine and spirits. When he was working in Ireland in 2008, he got hooked on craft beer and homebrews. But the homebrew scene in Europe was not as developed as in the US, Yin said.

Wickham's strong interest in homebrewing led him to post messages on a local message board asking to meet other homebrewers.

He and Yin decided to set up a platform for people who enjoy craft beers and homebrew.

Nine people showed up at the first gathering, though Yin was the only Chinese. One person was Russian, and "the rest were all Americans," Yin said.

Wickham sends out a newsletter every month to attend-



Beijing Homebrewing Society founders Yin Hai (left) and Jacob Wickham

ees with the society's mission statement: "an organization of enthusiasts that promote beer knowledge, culture, and appreciation through education and personal experience."

In May, they started a Sina Weibo account.

"Only a very small number

of people like craft beer and homebrew in Beijing so far," Yin said, "but I think Weibo is a fun way to connect with other brewers."

At the English-language meeting on Tuesday, around 15 people showed up – three were Chinese.

It's not a surprise the concept has yet to catch on. "Homebrewing" is still relatively unheard of in China.

"I thought all beers taste the same," said Chen Qi, a local food editor.

The fun of homebrewing, Yin said, is the process of creating something tailored to your personal preferences.

"When you are homebrewing, you don't care about the cost you spend on raw materials," he said. In commercial production, many beer companies use cheaper materials to replace quality ones and weaken the flavor as a result.

At a Chinese-specific gathering, Yin said the first topic was "Tsingdao is not beer." It's 30 to 40 percent rice.

Most of those who attended the English gathering have

tried making their own beers in the past. The discussion grew heated as people compared malt types, and when they discussed whether it was accepted to use tap water.

Wickham talked about how temperature affects the flavors of malt: how it can make something taste like chocolate or coffee.

"I can't follow what Jacob [Wickham] said just now," said Xiaobian'r, owner of Pass-by Bar, who has collected 500 different beer bottles starting five years ago. "But I am happy to find a group like this, with people who have the same interests in quality beer."

Xiaobian'r has made a homebrew with Yin and Wickham, and is looking forward to sharing it with others at the next gathering.

"So excited," he said.

Swing Beijing's Monday classes move to new venue

By Annie Wei

With CD Café's recent closing, Swing Beijing has moved its Monday classes to another venue: Bossa Nova, a bar on the second floor of Taiyue Suites on Sanlitun South Street.

As before, Monday classes are for beginner and intermediate students.

At beginners' classes, participants continually change partners to practice the basic steps, which teachers explain in detail.

One of the teachers is Josh Dominick, from the US, who runs his own business and has been with Swing Beijing since 2006.

"I like this dance," Dominick said, because it's freer and one can cultivate a unique style. As a

lead dancer and teacher, he said he's noticed many participants have gained self-confidence through learning swing.

"People who come here are easygoing, friendly and willing to help each other," he said. "You don't need to worry about being a beginner."

For more than eight years since its establishment, Swing Beijing has tried to introduce swing dance and music to Beijing. Apart from regular classes, the group also puts on outdoor performances, dancing on the Great Wall, near Houhai Lake and in Chaoyang Park.

The group is a mixture of locals and expats. Members introduce different types of

swing so participants have more choices. Anyone interested should check out swingbeijing.com for more details.



Swing Beijing offers private classes and performances for companies.

CFP Photo



Some of the city's homebrewers

Photos provide by Yin Hai

Euro Cup viewing strategy



The biggest soccer tournament of the year is happening right now in Ukraine and Poland. Games are broadcast live at midnight and 2:45 am in China, which is an awkward time for those who have day jobs. We've consulted a doctor of traditional medicine for advice on how to stay up late and remain productive during work hours.

Tip one: Take a nap during daytime

Headaches are normal reactions after an all-nighter. If you plan on watching a late game, take a nap during the day to avoid brain cramps the next day.

Tip two: Move around during halftime

A two-hour soccer match will strain already tired eyes. Give your body something else to focus on when there's a break in the action.

Tip three: Don't drink too much alcohol

Even though beer and soccer go hand-in-hand, too much drinking may cause gastrointestinal discomfort. Fruit drinks are best.

Tip four: Get a hold of yourself

It's an emotional game, we understand, but overexcitement has been known to cause hypertension and, in rare cases, heart attacks. Also, you don't want to disturb your neighbors.

(By Cui Can)



Police crack down on drunk drivers.

CFP Photo

Hutong exhibition at Capital Museum



By Annie Wei

An exhibition all about hutong, the ancient alleyways of Beijing, opened at the Capital Museum on Tuesday.

The exhibition presents 130 antiques and 560 photos showing how Beijing's hutongs have evolved and how contributed to local lifestyle. Many of these photos have never before been exhibited.

The exhibition will continue through October 21.

Capital Museum

Where: 16 Fuxingmen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District

Open: Every day except Monday, 9 am - 5 pm (no entry after 4 pm)

Tel: 6337 0491

Photo by Huang Liang

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyang@ynet.com

The lease on my apartment is expiring and I'm looking to rent a new place. I was thinking about older hutong homes, but my only concern is many of these need renovation, and I don't know where to start.

Many interior decorating companies provide renovation services - for hutong houses, too. Henglige Design and Decorating Company is low-priced and does a good job. The materials they use are environmentally friendly. Call them at 5126 9984 for more information.

My wedding date is set! Where can I find a shop that prints wedding invitations? Do you know of a good made-to-order shop?

Check Imwedding, which provides all kinds of wedding supplies like invitations, candy boxes and flowers. It has four types of invitation cards there. It offers printing services. Experienced designers can tailor the invitations according to your preference. Be warned that they don't speak English. Visit imwedding.com or call 8477 0378 for more information.

I bought an iPhone in the US and need to unlock it. How do I do so?

Many mobile phone repair stores in Zhongnancun, the technology hub in Haidian District, have unlocking services. You can easily find one at Dinghao Shangcheng, Zhongnancun.

I sculpt wood and clay as a hobby, but I've left most of my tools back in Australia. Is there a store that sells fine sculpting tools and supplies here in Beijing?

Try looking around the Central Academy of Fine Arts, located at 8 Huajiadi Nanjie, Chaoyang District. We've also found you an online supplier: give them a call at 15001281198 or visit the shop on shop35606621.taobao.com.

(By Wei Ying)



Lady Gaga, New York, 2009

Photos provided by Mario Testino and Art Partner Inc

Sn

By Niu Chen

Mario Testino's exhibition on the island June 6 at the Museum. *Mar* *Private View*, the includes 93 shots from his 30-year career through June 2

"It is really a see Testino's work. Angelica Cheung of *Vogue China* appreciate his talent. Unlike many photographers who enjoy sees himself as a photographer or a portrait

Testino first in 1982 to shoot for the magazine. In 2011, he shoot for *Vogue* changes inspired his first exhibition

The show divided work into three parts: *My Own Fashion*, *British Royal Family* and *than Life*.

Larger than life portraits of A-listers as Emma Watson, Crowe and Madonna, a half-length portrait of Gaga, which was in 2009. Gaga's platinum blonde complexion, against the background, all das strong visual impact

Portraits of the Family include the of Princess Diana, comfortable, relaxed

"Princess Diana is very memorable because the period in my life career forever,"

The last section of *Fashion*, focusing

nap! Flash!



Mario Testino at the exhibition in Beijing

Princess Di's favorite photog brings collection to Beijing



Girl in Red-Karlie Kloss, Beijing, 2011



Kate Moss, London, 2006

no opened his first
the Chinese main-
Today Art
o Testino —
the exhibition,
ots from Testino's
and will be open
27.

a rare opportunity to
orks in China," said
ng, editorial director
t. "I really appre-
and simplicity.
g-name photogra-
y posturing, he just
a fashion photogra-
it photographer."
came to Beijing in
or *Glamour* mag-
he returned to
e. The city's great
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vides Testino's
e collections, In
on, Portraits of the
family and Larger

Life features his
ist celebrities such
on, Gwyneth Pal-
onna. It starts with
portrait of Lady
as a *Vogue* cover
s bright pink coat,
de hair and tan
d the orange back-
h, delivering a
mpact.
the British Royal
s exclusive pictures
na, who looks com-
d and elegant.
iana's pictures are
e and very legend-
ey determined a
fe and changed my
" Testino said.
tion, In My Own
es on fashion

spreads featuring super models
such as Kate Moss and Gisele
Bundchen.

Testino said that photograph-
ing the famous is fascinating, and
that he loves to show celebrities as
real people.

"When I photograph someone,
I try to understand them — their
fun side, their soft side, their sexy
side — whatever it may be that I
discover when I am with them,"
he said. "Sometimes it can lead to
very surprising results."

Testino said the exhibition
gave him a rare opportunity to
tie together all sides of his life
and work.

From Peru to London

Born in 1954 in Lima, Testino
attended an American Catholic
school and went on to study eco-
nomics at Universidad del Pacifico.

He was hard to miss on
campus with his pink flares and
platform heels. His father, a busi-
nessman, took advantage of Testi-
no's English skills and used him
as a translator on business trips to
New York.

His first trip to the Big Apple
fueled Testino's journey into fash-
ion. With the support of his
father, he went to London in 1976
to study photography.

Life in London was difficult,
Testino said.

He lived in an unconverted
floor of a hospital — a dosser's
home — with no money for food
or transportation. "People would
urinate in the stairwells," he told
The Telegraph.

He worked as an assistant for
theater photographer John Vickers
and waited tables to make a living.
He also spent a lot of time phoning
editors and fashion directors, who
only told him to call back a month
later. The editors soon learned to
hide when he called.

Testino befriended one assis-
tant, Lucinda Chambers, who
later became the publication's
fashion director. He finally gained
some recognition when he shot
the cover and fashion spread for
Over 21.

It was the Versace ad featuring
Madonna in 1995 that made Tes-
tino a well-received name.

Madonna saw Testino's photos
in a magazine and contacted him
directly to shoot an ad campaign
for Versace.

On the first day they met,
Madonna showed up without
makeup, wearing only flat shoes
and a ponytail. He used her
natural look for the campaign
with only minor retouches. Gianni
Versace, the designer, was so
impressed by how flattering the
clothes looked that he decided to
produce an entire photo series.

When *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*
picked up the campaign, Testino
became a sought-after
photographer.

Madonna favored his unique
natural style and continued to
work with him after the ad cam-
paign. "When Madonna got preg-
nant, I was with her taking
pictures of her tummy moving,
while hundreds of photographers
were outside, desperate for her,"
Testino told *The Telegraph*.

The iconic portraits of Princess
Diana brought Testino's surging
career to a whole new level,
cementing his position as one of
the world's most prestigious pho-
tographers.

Vanity Fair chose Testino to
shoot Diana for its cover in
1997. The shoot took place just
five months before her death. At
first, Diana sat with her knees
together and her hands in her
lap. To avoid royal clichés, Tes-
tino persuaded Diana to kick off

her shoes, take off her jewelry
and stretch out on the sofa, cre-
ating an easy and comfortable
atmosphere.

Diana trusted him completely
and straightened her hair and
put on more natural makeup. Tes-
tino told *The Telegraph* that he
wanted her to look like a person
— not a princess. He caught her in
a moment when she freed herself
from a lot of burdens.

Ever since the shoot, Testino
has been favored by the royal
family. He also shot the royal
engagement of Prince William
and Kate Middleton in 2010.

Apart from his work in fash-
ion, Testino is devoted to chari-
table activities.

As a Save the Children ambas-
sador, he helped to raise funds to
build the El Salvador Clinic in the
Pueblo Nuevo District, Chinchu,
Peru. The clinic was built for chil-
dren living with tuberculosis in an
area devastated by an earthquake
in August 2007. The clinic was
funded from the sale of a single
print of one of his portraits of the
late Princess Diana.

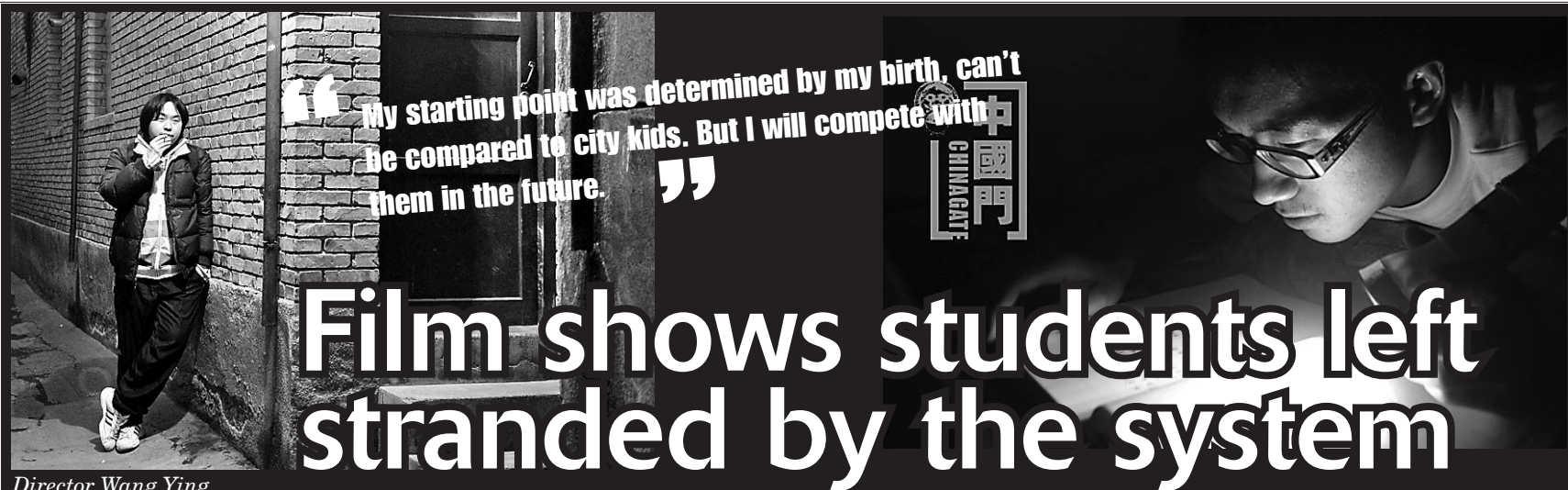
He has also helped raise
money to build a cancer clinic
in a Moscow children's hospital.
Cancer is a very personal cause
for the photographer, as his
brother died of liver cancer at the
age of 10.

"I know people who have
everything and all they do is com-
plain and bicker — give off nega-
tive energy. When you try and do
something positive, it helps others
and also makes you feel better
about yourself," Testino said.

Next month, he is opening
MATE, a non-profit association in
Barranco, Lima. It will be a plat-
form for Peruvian art and will
hold a permanent exhibition of
his photos.



Mario Testino



“My starting point was determined by my birth, can't be compared to city kids. But I will compete with them in the future.”



Film shows students left stranded by the system

Director Wang Ying

By Niu Chen

On June 7 and 8, 9.15 million high school students took a test that may change their lives: the National College Entrance Exam.

Although fewer students took the test this year, the exam remains the only way for most rural students to leave their villages and start a career.

The pressure of more than 9 million test takers competing for about 6 million college openings was the subject of *China Gate*, a documentary directed by Wang Ying as part of the 2010 CNEX.

For that year, the non-profit organization devoted to supporting documentary filmmakers chose two words for its theme: crisis and opportunity.

Wang immediately thought of high school graduates.

His film begins in Huining, a poverty-stricken county in the northwest where students at Huining No. 1 High School spend their break reciting from a textbook.

With books piled high on their desks, they are so engrossed in their studies that they don't even look at the camera. The sports field, rather than being used for athletics, is claimed by students who pace back and forth as they memorize the con-

tents of their books.

“Students even rushed when they went to the toilet or took a drink. They didn't want to lose a second that could have been spent preparing for the exam,” Wang said. “I actually felt guilty when I interrupted them for my documentary.”

A teacher he filmed said more than 290,000 students would take the exam in Huining: no more than 70,000 could hope to be admitted to first- or second-tier schools.

The pressure of the competition extends to teachers and parents. Teachers are expected to get up around 5:30 am and return home after 9:30 pm. Many parents give up their farming work to move to the school and look after their children.

“My dad works outside and leaves mom home to take care of us,” said Yang Huibing, a 17-year-student.

“My starting point (Huining) was determined by my birth, and I can't be compared to city kids. But I will have the chance to compete with them in the future,” one student said at a class meeting.

Yang said he hoped to attend a famous school in Beijing.

In the capital, Wang turned his lens on college graduates who came from poor rural villages. Most said

they found city life considerably less rosy than they imagined.

Recent graduates 23-year-old Wang Xiaozhi and 22-year-old Ma Long live in the slums of suburban Beijing. When they failed to find a job after graduation, they decided to earn money handing out free samples of toothpaste and fliers.

While the bitter experience convinced Wang Xiaozhi to return home, Ma remains determined to stay in Beijing.

“I won't leave for the next three to five years. I'm smart enough and diligent. There is no reason that I cannot make a living here,” he says. “Beijing will be my son's hometown.”

The director also films students from wealthier backgrounds in Shanghai. Liu Jie, a 23-year-old graduate of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, started learning piano, saxophone and singing at the age of eight.

“It cost 100 yuan per hour to learn piano seven or eight years ago, and my family accumulated some debts,” Liu says. “I thought it would be better after graduation.”

Liu failed to find a job and became a part-time piano tutor.

Viewers said the film was depressing in that it exposed how

many graduates are left unemployed and with broken dreams. For Wang, that may have been the whole point.

Documentary is responsible for unveiling the lives of vulnerable people, he said. “There are graduates who successfully change their fate, but it's more important to look at what happens when the system fails.”

Wang started the film to explore the theme of graduation, but later expanded it to expose the social problems hidden behind the exam system.

He said he thinks education exists to ease the uneven distribution of social resources, and that inequality is most likely behind the problems in this process.

The blind pursuit of higher education only hides people's anxiety and insecurity about the current system.

Born in Shanxi, 28-year-old Wang started his film career as a critic and founded the Youth Film Handbook with friends. He began filming *China Gate* at the end of 2009 and finished editing in June 2011.

His next film project will be a feature-length documentary about textile workers.



Students at Huining No.1 High school review their old tests and notes. Chinese education has long been criticised for forcing students to cram.

Photos provided by Wang Xiaoshuai



News for kids, by kids.

No one knows better than Chinese parents how the future depends on children: most spare no effort to be “wolf dads” and “tiger moms” to send their children down the path to success. As part of its commitment to young readers, *Beijing Today*, together with *Middle School Times* and *Beijing Children's Weekly*, is beginning a weekly education report to share the views and events happening in the lives of Chinese youth.

What are they saying?



We are all tax payers!

In elementary school, we were taught that “it is an honor to pay taxes,” because the taxes are from the people and used for the people.

I agree, but we should make it clear how taxes are collected and used.

By most estimates, the average Chinese citizen will pay 1 million yuan in taxes during the course of his or her life, assuming average consumption.

The taxes that we pay far exceed the amount stated on our wages. We actually begin to pay taxes from childhood.

A bottle of water costs 3 yuan at a store, of which 0.10 yuan is collected as a value-added tax in the process of processing, shipping and selling.

A 100-yuan pizza includes 21.4 yuan in taxes and fees that we never see.

More than 70 percent of tax income comes from manufacturing, shipping and selling a product. This is part of an indirect tax, which is one of the five tax categories in China.

All together Chinese consumers bear 19 total taxes. These have caused an increase in prices, which has in turn prevented the Chinese economy from transitioning from export-led to consumption-led.

The government promised as early as 2004 to streamline and consolidate its taxes and categories, but we have not seen any positive result in eight years of tax reform.

Instead, we have seen a rapid increase in tax income that exceeds our annual increase in GDP.

In 2011, China's tax income revenue reached 9 trillion yuan, 22.6 percent higher than the previous year.

We have to ask where

these taxes are used and oppose the inappropriate uses of these valuable resources. There is a huge pool of public servants working in China, and much of the tax money ends up covering their private expenses and lining the coffers of those

working in the ministries, provinces and counties.

They prepare fake projects and inflate office costs to boost their budget and pocket the extra money. Only when these officials' budgets are made public will taxpayers consider their money to be well spent.

Benjamin Franklin is quoted as saying, “In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.” I agree.

As high school students, we are the contributors and beneficiaries of taxes. However, as the citizens of a modern society, we must monitor and supervise how our contributions are used.

— Tian Gengshuo, student, Huiwen Middle School



CFP Photo

What do they care about?



Seeking an ordinary life

A mother in Beijing recently complained on a Douban forum that her daughter, a middle school student with poor grades, said she has no higher aspirations than teaching elementary education.

The low goal made her parents feel disappointed and ashamed. The mother shared the story online hoping others could help her find a way to change her daughter's direction.

Most children are raised to chase fame and success in academics, politics or business. With such expectations, the children carry a heavy burden from their formative years into college.

Heroes have big dreams

I pity the woman's daughter. With rising incomes, more and more teens are becoming complacent and losing their will to excel.

A Chinese proverb says only when you set a big target can you reach the middle target. People who set a middle target will reach the lowest target. People who aim for the lowest target will achieve nothing.

As a kindergarten student, I admired Xiang Yu, a hero of more than 2,000 years ago who died trying to establish his kingdom.

Later, I admired Zhang Zizhong, a general who died fighting Japanese invaders.

As a teen, I admired the poetry of ancient writers who described patriotic efforts to protect the country.

I cannot help but wonder whether my ambition will fade with age, but I believe high goals will give me the strength and drive to overcome life's challenges.

— Zhao Yuanshu, Red Scarf News Agency, Jingxi Branch

What is success?

I used to have the same goal as the girl in the story: to become a kindergarten teacher.

When I was growing up, my mother did everything imaginable to deter me.

We were told to be successful as kids, and that everyone is equal. We were told to set big goals, like becoming a senior manager or political leader.

The endless onslaught of such messages gave us no chance to think about whether such careers would really make

us happy.

Our education made us more utilitarian.

Ultimately, we were forced to give up our dreams and fit into whatever openings society had in store.

To be a hero is a choice, and to be one of the people who stands on the sidelines is also a choice. Neither is right or wrong.

— Meng Xiangyan, Red Scarf News Agency, Xicheng Branch

Master of my destiny

You might say someone is a bad soldier if he has no dreams of becoming a general, but it's impossible for everyone to become a general.

It's as though everyone is forcing us to run while carrying a huge rock, but the place we are told to go rarely lines up with where we want to go.

We have so many cram classes after our normal classes end and no chances to socialize.

How many people who aspire to become professional musicians, entertainers or politicians ever achieve their dreams?

Morality and virtue are

more important than talent. Hitler was talented, but he used that talent to bring disaster to our world.

Many pupils wear eyeglasses and lug around their heavy books, but their interests and ability to express themselves have vanished. What will they be able to achieve when their years of education end?

I don't want to be a hero. I only want to be someone who watches from the sidelines. I want to be the master of my own life.

— Jiang Xuege, student, Beijing No. 11 Middle School (By Zhao Hongyi)



Illustrated by Chen Bing

Vintage gift ideas for Dad



JD's new watch is simple and elegant, price to be determined

By Annie Wei

This weekend is Father's Day. If you're looking for gift ideas, please allow us to suggest something vintage: a bike, a watch and a pen – the most popular items for men back in the 1980s in the Chinese mainland.

Forget about iPads, which encourage laziness. A bike will get your dad out and about (it can be replaced with hiking equipment or a gym membership); a watch is something for him to show off to friends; and a pen encourages old-fashioned mental stimulation, though painting implements or musical instruments are also great.



A classic Chinese bicycle brand, Phoenix – made in Shanghai – was the dream gift for Chinese men 30 years ago.



Italian brand Montegrappa's luxury fountain pen, price to be determined



Neutrogena's Ultra Sheer Skin SunblockBody Mist SPF50, price to be determined



Cor Sine Labe Doli bowtie, 1,690 yuan



Many people want to learn musical instruments in their late years.

CFP Photos



As one of Germany's leading direct sales enterprises for body care and beauty products, LR Health & Beauty Systems hired Hollywood star Bruce Willis to launch a man's fragrance, price to be determined

Wulixiang presents creative Cantonese

By Annie Wei

The newly opened Traders Hotel near Upper East Side residential compound promises to offer plenty of greenery for those who are tired of their urban surroundings.

But its restaurants will continue to be the main draw.

We recommend the Chinese restaurant Wulixiang, with executive chef Kam Siew Ton from Malaysia, who just launched a menu of classic Cantonese dishes.

Here's what we liked: Cantonese-style roasted boneless chicken with salad as appetizer; and an assorted dim sum platter of shrimp dumplings, steamed red rice flour roll stuffed with shrimp and chives and fried turnip cake with sauce.

Deep-fried prawn balls in orange sauce and baked codfish with egg whites is also good. The prawns are big and tender, while the orange sauce does not overpower the prawn's natural sweetness.

The fried rice with diced goose liver and crab roe shows the skills of the chef: the rice doesn't stick together like globs, and the goose liver and crab roe enhances the dish's flavors.

Wulixiang

Where: Wulixiang, 2F, Traders Upper East Hotel, 2 Dongsihuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 2 pm;

5-9 pm

Tel: 5907 8888



Deep-fried prawn balls in orange sauce

Photos provided by Wulixiang



Fried rice with diced goose liver and crab roe

Noodles with a punk-rock kick

By Guo Yao

Thousands of restaurants serve noodles, but few are headed by a personality like Lei Jun – the lead singer of the punk band Misandao.

As a well known figure in the punk world, Lei's Noodle Inn by Nanluogu Xiang has become a party spot for him and his friends. In the spring, prompted by his friends, he decided to take his cooking skills to the next level by opening a restaurant.

All ingredients are bought from Niujie, a Muslim area that sells quality meat and noodles.

We recommend the noodles with fresh mushroom and special meat sauce (28 yuan), a creative taken on zhajiangmian, a tradi-

tional Beijing way of preparing noodles with minced meat paste, soy sauce and thin strips of cucumbers and other vegetables.

The noodles with sliced chicken and dried shrimp in sesame paste sauce (28 yuan) is also good, inspired by traditional sesame paste noodle and prepared with an elaborately mixed sauce, served with crushed peanuts and cucumber.

Because Lei used to work part-time in a pub, he said it was easy to create dishes that combine local and foreign flavors. Fresh shrimp and vegetables with hot pepper sauce (48 yuan) offers a rare presentation of Thai banana oil with fermented soy beans from Guizhou. Chicken wings

and green beans in a special Shanghai soy sauce (38 yuan) goes well with wine.

Two drinks are recommended: rose tea (10 yuan per cup) with lemon and honey, which is free of additives, and tastes sweet and sour, and chrysanthemum tea with honey (10 yuan per cup), a comfort for those with dry and sore throats.

Noodle Inn

Where: 81 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: noon – 10 pm

Tel: 8404 4819

Rose tea, 10 yuan

Photo by Guo Yao

Wines of the month

By Annie Wei

The last couple of weeks have seen several wine tastings held around town, as wineries from around the world stop by before heading off to Hong Kong's Vinexpo.

It gave us a chance to review several good ones. Here are our recommendations.

Chateau Palmer 2009

The owners of Chateau Palmer, France recently brought their 2009 series to Beijing. The wines bear no false notes, as the weather in 2009 was perfect, allowing the grapes to change color and ripen at just the right time.

The Chateau Palmer 2009 is young and has lots of aging potential. Its retail price starts at 2,000 yuan.

Premium family vini

Pol Roger Champagne, Hugel & fils, and Chateau de Beaucastel are wineries with many years of history. Pol Roger was founded in 1849; its champagne has fine bubbles and nice texture, and retail for 650 yuan.

Hugel & fils began in 1639, and is a major producer in Alsace, France. It produces high-end wines from its own vineyards.

Located in the southern area of Rhone Valley, Chateau de Beaucastel has been around since the 1500s. Its red wines are more traditionally blended, and its white wine, Chateauneuf du Pape, is a varietal Roussanne wine, which is quite rare for the region.

Anyone interested can contact its distributor, Summergate Fine Wines and Spirits.

Gaja

The Gaja family in Piemonte Region, Italy are considered modernists who brought fame to Italian wines. American journalist Edward Steinberg spent a year in Gaja, starting from 1991, to write *The Vines of San Lovenza*, considered as one of the most interesting books about wine. It details how the Gaja family devotes itself to the wine-making process, from grape-planting to exporting.

Chantal Chi, a Shanghaiese wine expert who lives in France, helped translate the book into Chinese.

Anyone interested in the wine can contact distributor ASCwines.



Chateau Palmer



Dining

Aroma's Father's Day brunch

Surprise your father at Aroma with a delicious brunch. A wide range of seafood and international delicacies is a great way to celebrate Father's Day.

Aroma offers mouth-watering Chinese, Indian, Japanese, South Asian and European dishes served from an open

kitchen setting. The exciting desserts make for a sweet ending.

Where: The Ritz-Carlton Beijing, 83A Jianguo Lu, China Central Place, Chaoyang District

When: June 17, 11:30 am – 3 pm

Cost: 558 yuan with free coffee, tea, soft drinks, juice, local beer, house wine and champagne; free to children younger than 12; one bottle of wine for every dad (15 percent gratuity)

Tel: 5908 8161



Barolo's Father's Day lunch

Express your gratitude for this important man in your life by providing Dad with a great meal at the award-winning restaurant Barolo.

Enjoy classic Italian cuisine with a modern twist, served in the elegant and cozy restaurant. Barolo defines the Italian lifestyle in Beijing.

Where: The Ritz-Carlton Beijing, 83A Jianguo Lu, China Central Place, Chaoyang District

When: June 17, 11:30 am – 2 pm

Cost: 388 yuan with 3-course lunch, free sparkling, red and white wine; free to children younger than 12; one bottle of wine for every dad (15 percent surcharge)

Tel: 5908 8151



Seasonal specialties at Yao Chi Cantonese Cuisine

Celebrate the bloom of the season at Yao Chi with special vegetable and fruit dishes.

Recharge your body with invigorating steamed crab in black bean sauce, stir-fried beef tenderloin with bell peppers, braised conch with kale in abalone sauce and braised mixed meat and mushrooms with fresh mixed vegetables.

If you prefer sweet to savory, indulge with fried sesame prawns in sweet lemon sauce, crispy chicken with honeydew melon, fried rice in a pineapple cup and stir-fried prawns and scallops with mixed fresh fruit.

This special fruit and vegetable promotion is available throughout June.

Where: Yao Chi, Grand Millennium Beijing, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until June 30

Tel: 8587 6888 ext. 3013



Gift baskets to celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival

This Dragon Boat Festival, Hilton Beijing is offering exquisite gift baskets that include traditional rice dumplings and healthy flavors sure to satisfy your taste buds.

The Dragon Boat Festival Gift Basket includes dumplings filled with chestnut paste and purple rice; yellow rice and red bean; spiced beef; and egg yolk and salted ham.

The Deluxe Rice Cake Gift Basket includes fillings of rice wine; scallop, abalone and mushroom; mixed rice and bean; barley and chestnut paste; red bean; Chinese dates; and a fragrant sachet.

The Premium Rice Cake Gift Basket has dumplings stuffed with rice wine; organic duck eggs; grand slam; egg yolk and salted ham; mixed rice and bean; red bean; Chinese dates; and a fragrant sachet.

Where: Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Cost: Dragon Boat 199 yuan; Deluxe Rice Cake 399 yuan;

Premium Rice Cake 499 yuan

Tel: 5865 5246



Dragon Boat Festival treats

Celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival with a wide variety of delectable dumplings from the Summer Palace. The dumplings are filled with lotus seed paste, sweetened red bean paste, assorted meats and Chinese dates.

Beautiful packaged gift boxes are available and make ideal gifts for family and friends.

Where: Summer Palace, China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: Until June 23

Tel: 6505 3285, 6505 2266 ext. 5722/5723



Hotel

Xiang Junior celebrates one year

On the afternoon of June 1, Shangri-La Hotel, Beijing once again became a children's paradise.

The joy on the children's faces added a touch of vitality to the hotel's lobby, where a clown was making balloons for the group. The children's paintings were used to decorate all the walls.

Parents and children came to celebrate the anniversary of Xiang Junior, the hotel's youth club. Nearly 120 children between the ages of 3 and 12 came out for the celebration on Children's Day.

Since June 1, 2011, Xiang Junior has prepared numerous



activities for its young members, including classes in sushi preparation, flower arrangement, a Christmas carnival and other creative activities designed to build dexterity and unleash the imagination.

The hotel also has a playroom where children can meet new friends.

(By Jackie Zhang)

Fri, Jun. 15



Nightlife Italy X China: The Medullary Paralysis and Army of Jade Kirin

Bringing together Italian and Chinese rock: the Chinese band Army of Jade Kirin was founded on October 11, 2008; the Medullary Paralysis is an Italian rock band formed by Alessandro Alfano, Valentino Coletto

and Ada Guagliardi in 2007.
Where: MAO Live House,
111 Gulou Dong Dajie,
Dongcheng District
When: 9-11:30 pm
Admission: 80 yuan (60
for presale and students)
Tel: 6402 5080

Movie Alexander Kluge's movie retrospective

The Goethe Institute will

follow up on its first Alexander Kluge screening in Beijing in March with further discussion of his work. Twenty-four of his works from 1961 to 2009 will be shown during this retrospective.

Where: UCCA, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Every day until
June 24, 8 am - 10 pm

Admission: 15 yuan (10 yuan for students, free for VIP)

Tel: 5780 0200



Sat, Jun. 16



Nightlife Jerry and the Hip-Swinger Jazz Live

Jerry and the Hip Swingers play swing, Latin, blues, standards and novelty songs, with a heavy dose of comedy. They've played in clubs, lounges, hotels and at corporate events around the world.

Where: 121 Bar, 121 Jiu Gulou Dajie, Xicheng District
When: 9 pm

Admission: 80 yuan (60 for presale and students)

Tel: 6402 5080

Nightlife Sun Fun Gun: Hedgehog's first album release party

Sun Fun Gun is Hedgehog's first album since bassist He Yifan joined the band. The album was made by John Grew from New York and recorded by Wram Record and Rubber Track Studio, marking Hedgehog's first time cooperating with foreign producers.

Where: Yugong Yishan, Zhangzizhong Lu No. 3-2, Dongcheng District

When: 9-11:30 pm

Admission: 80 yuan (60 yuan for presale)

Tel: 6404 2711



Sun, Jun. 17

Exhibition "Face Contact"

This show aims to offer a broad and condensed view of the general concept behind PhotoEspaña 2011: Interfaces, Portrait and Communication at the same time. While the festival's various exhibitions present and discuss diverse aspects of this platform, Face Contact acts as a kind of "flagship" for the event.

Where: Iberia Center for Contemporary Art, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 11 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 5931



Mon, Jun. 18

Musical Crazy for You

Crazy for You is a Broadway musical revised by Mike Ockrent, based on George Gershwin's *Girl Crazy*. It has been called the show that revived American musical comedies.

Where: The Central Academy of Drama, 39 Dong Mianhua Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: Every day until June 25, 7:30-10 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 5931

Script Reading Two dramas

Xiao Jutuan Theatre Group will perform *A Chef that Doesn't Want to Practice Piano Isn't a Good Son*, by playwright Fan Yitang, and *My Poor Marat*, by Aleksei Arbuzov.

Where: Penghao Theatre, 35 Dong Mianhua Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6400 6472



Tue, Jun. 19

Dance

Interface 2012

This drama, by playwright and director Hou Ying, is about human civilization and culture and features dancers Tan Yuanbo, Liu Zheng, Shen Jun and Wu Xiaobo. Randall Love will play accompanying music.



When: 7:30-11:30 pm

Admission: 80 yuan

Tel: 6400 6472

Where: Shang Theatre, 46 Fangjia Hutong, Yonghegong Dajie, Dongcheng District

Movie Hotel Meina

Based during World War II, a Jewish-settled hotel on the Italian-Swiss border is seized by the German army. Some Jewish immigrants flee to Switzerland, with the help of one Miss Mena.

Where: Theatre of Italian Council, 2 Sanlitun Dong Er Jie, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 6532 2187



(By Liu Xiaochen)

Wed, Jun. 20

Exhibition ARCO photography

This exhibition includes photos collected over the last 30 years from ARCO, Spain's most important contemporary art fair and one of Europe's top art events. It includes 60 pictures taken by some of the most renowned contemporary Spanish artists, including Cristina García Rodero, Alberto García Alix, Joan Fontcuberta and Ouka Lele, and well-known Chinese photographer Fa Man.

Where: Institution of Cervantes, Jia 1, Gongti Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 11 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5879 9666 ext. 3010



Thu, Jun. 21

Salon Guava electronic music DJ workshop

The workshop's teacher is Beijing newest DJ, Howie Lee, who will share his experiences producing electronic music. Pete Donaldson, Guava's manager, will show how to operate the software Avid Protocols 10.

Where: Building 6, 22 International Art Plaza, 32 Baizhuan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30-9:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5876 0241



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Next week

Editor: Zhao Hongyi Designer: Zhao Yan

BEIJING TODAY

Taizhou, an ancient city on the Yangtze

By Zhao Hongyi

Located in the middle of Jiangsu Province, Taizhou is regarded as backyard of the Yangtze River Delta.

The city was founded 2,100 years ago as part of the great Chu Kingdom, with heavy influences from the kingdoms of Wu and Yue.

Currently nestled between tributaries on the northern bank of the Yangtze, close to the sea, it's an ideal place to escape the summer heat.

Taizhou is also famous for its maidenhair trees. Locals use the tree as a cash crop, and make tea from its leaves – believed to have health benefits especially for elders.

The city is widely acknowledged as one of the most livable places in China and home of some of its best gardens.

And it so happens to be the hometown of Hu Jintao. Here, you can learn more about China's president and find stories of his childhood.



Local residential buildings



Zhenhu Wetland National Park



Mei Lanfang Memorial



Fangong Dam

Zhenhu Wetland National Park

Located in the northwest of Taizhou, the wetland consists of hundreds of *duotian* (land comprising many individual plots) and a vast lake.

The *duotian* have been tilled by farming families for many generations. The silt from the lake makes the soil particularly fertile.

Today, most of this land is used for rapeseed, which blossoms in March and April, turning the lake-side into a field of yellow.

Locals sometimes hold dragon boat races on the lake. During autumn, the fish in the water grow plump, and fishermen catch shrimp and crabs.

The lake is also home to hundreds of species of wild birds and animals.

Tao Yuan (Peach Garden)

During ancient times, this garden used to be a vast land of peach trees. It became famous during the early Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) playwright after Kong Shangren wrote the play, *The Tale of Peach Blossom Fan*, set in this place.

The drama was a Kunqu, the antecedent of Peking Opera. It was

later enthusiastically received on the Peking Opera circuit.

The peach fields are now gone, but the garden remains, partly to commemorate Kong's famous work.

The best time to visit is March and April, when the peaches blossom. Locals often visit the garden as well, so it's not just a tourist destination.

Here, you can also taste traditional Taizhou cuisine, and relax on the vast lake in a wooden boat.

Mei Lanfang Memorial

Mei Lanfang may be the country's most famous Peking Opera performer, but few know that his family is from Taizhou.

In the early 1850s before moving to Beijing with a Kunqu troupe, Mei's grandfather was a countryside performer who used the Taizhou dialect to entertain crowds.

Mei Lanfang visited Taizhou several times, and spoke with a Taizhou accent throughout his life.

A large Mei Lanfang Memorial was built in the 1990s, and has become a popular site among tourists.

Peking Opera is popular in Taizhou, and visitors can find good shows year-round in this southern city.

Fangong Dam

Fan Zhongyan was a senior official and literary master during the Song Dynasty (960-1279). He was exiled to Taizhou in 1023 and assigned to build a dam along the entire coast of Jiangsu Province.

At that time, Taizhou was close to the Yellow Sea, and constantly blasted by the waves.

Fan carefully designed a natural dam, stretching from Lianyungang in the north to Nantong in the south, and oversaw its construction.

His descendants named it Fangong Dam, meaning the Dam of Mr. Fan.

Erosion has wiped out nearly all traces of the dam, but some parts are still worth visiting.

How to get there:

Take train T155 or T215 from Harbin to Taizhou via Beijing. Both leave Beijing around 8 pm and arrive in Taizhou at 8 am the next day.

Or take the newly opened Air China route from Beijing to Yangzhou-Taizhou Airport, which departs at 7:30am.

Accommodations:

Taizhou has many hotels and restaurants that are reasonably priced.



A corner of Tao Yuan (Peach Garden)

CFP Photos